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Letter dated 19 November 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw to your attention the joint statement issued by the Heads of State and Government of countries of South-Eastern Europe at their meeting in Heracleion, Crete, in Greece, on 4 November 1997 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 81 and 112, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christos ZACHARAKIS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Joint statement issued at Heracleion, Greece, on 4 November 1997, by the Heads of State and Government of countries of South-Eastern Europe

We, the Heads of State and Government of countries of South-Eastern Europe, President Kiro Gligorov, President Slobodan Milošević, Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea, Prime Minister Ivan Kostov, Prime Minister Fatos Nano, Prime Minister Costas Simitis and Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mr. Blagoj Handziski, Mrs. Nadezhda Mihailova, Mr. Paskal Milo, Mr. Milan Milutinovich, Mr. Theodoros Pangalos and Mr. Adrian Severin and the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mihovil Malbasic, participating as an observer, representing the freely elected Governments of the South-Eastern European peoples met for the first time in our history in Crete and agreed on the following:

We shall work together to create in our region conditions for the prosperity of our nations in a framework of peace, security, good-neighbourliness and stability.

We are determined to pursue South-Eastern Europe cooperation, on a mutual and equal basis, in the firm belief that each of us has much to learn from the others.

We shall promote the state of law, the protection of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including inter-ethnic dialogue, individual freedoms and a market economy that will allow individual enterprises to flourish and generate employment and opportunities for all and especially for youth.

We affirm our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, the Paris Charter for a New Europe and the Helsinki Final Act, including all 10 principles referred to therein, namely, sovereign equality, respect for rights inherent in sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of States, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal affairs, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, cooperation among States and fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law.

We consider that the European orientation of our countries is an integral part of their political, economic and social development.

We aspire to transform our region into an area of cooperation and economic prosperity and, to that effect, we decided to promote good neighbourly relations and respect for international law.

We believe that Europe cannot be complete without our countries and our peoples, representing civilizations and historic traditions that are essential to the establishment of a contemporary European identity. European and Euro-Atlantic integration are essential in promoting the aforementioned objectives.

We shall encourage the cooperation of the genuine representatives of our peoples in our national parliaments, as well as their common intention to create a forum of understanding and friendly relations.

We reconfirmed our support for already existing regional initiatives sharing the same ideals with us, such as Royaumont, the South-East European Cooperative Initiative, Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the Central European Initiative.

We shall promote scientific, educational, cultural and sport relations as a means of strengthening our mutual understanding and friendship.

We shall cooperate with each other in the field of justice, the combat against organized crime, the halting of illicit drug and arms trafficking and the elimination of all forms of terrorism and shall take joint action against illegal and irregular migration.

Our cultural and religious diversity cannot be seen as a threat to our cooperation and security. On the contrary, we believe it is a powerful source of inspiration, creativity and dynamism.

We shall intensify our efforts for the increase of our economic cooperation, the improvement of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications and energy as well as for the establishment of favourable conditions for investments. We invite the competent ministers to meet at least once a year to assess progress.

We shall promote cross-border cooperation and to that effect we invite officials to meet regularly and Ministers of the Economy or Finance, or other Ministers responsible for it, to meet at least once a year to review the progress achieved.

We took into consideration different valuable proposals for the establishment of institutes and centres for the promotion of multilateral cooperation in various fields.

We call upon the Ministers for Foreign Affairs to meet at least once a year to conduct political consultations and to promote cooperation on issues of regional stability and security. Political directors will meet every three months for consultations and report to Ministers.

In order to ensure continuity between the countries undertaking the organization of summit or ministerial meetings as well as of various technical groups, the idea of establishing a joint secretariat will be discussed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

The Heads of State and Government of countries of South-Eastern Europe expressed their warm thanks for the hospitality of Greece in hosting the Crete summit meeting. They decided to hold their next summit meeting in Turkey in 1998.